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SUBJECT: WELCOME CABLE FOR CODEL TSONGAS (APRIL 5-8, 2009)

REF: STATE 027258

1. Embassy Kuwait welcomes CODEL Tsongas to travel to post April 5-8, 2009.

2. Visit Officer: An Embassy visit officer and a driver/expeditor will meet and assist you at the airport.

Embassy point of contact is:

Kristina Weiss, ISU Liaison
Office- (965) 2259-1170
Cell- (965) 9721-5933
Home- (965) 9936-0035
Fax- (965) 2259-1190
Unclass e-mail: WeissKA@state.gov

3. Lodging: Rooms have been reserved at the Radisson SAS Hotel for Apr 5-8, 2009. The hotel telephone number is (965) 2575-6000 and the fax number is (965)2565-2999. The single room rate at the hotel is approximately USD325.00 per night, which includes breakfast. The hotel accepts major credit cards and is within the per diem rate. The daily per diem rate for Kuwait is USD 339.00 for lodging, plus a meal and incidental expense (M&IE) allowance of USD 109.00 for a total of USD448.00.

4. Following is post's standard guidance for visitors to Kuwait:

a. Entry Requirements: Kuwait now issues single-entry visas to American citizens on arrival, upon presentation of a valid passport. There is a processing fee of three (3) Kuwaiti Dinar (KD 3.000, or USD 15.00) for each visa issued. The fee may be paid either in KD or USD. Post strongly advises travelers to carry some documentation on the purpose of their visit. Passengers arriving on other than commercial flights should anticipate extra delays, because immigration services are not available on the military side of the airfield and passports have to be carried to a different location at the airport for processing. Airport visas are valid for 90 days after arrival; anyone staying beyond this period must obtain an extension, which should be requested 2 weeks prior to visa expiration. Anyone departing Kuwait who has overstayed the visa will be charged a fine of KD 10.000 (US 35.00) per day at the airport. All travelers planning to visit Iraq should make sure that they obtain the required exit/entry stamps for each transit through Kuwait, and be aware that they will need to obtain a new Kuwaiti visa upon return, even after a daytrip to Baghdad. Failure to do so can result in heavy fines. If possible, travelers should try to obtain a multiple-entry visa before arriving in Kuwait.

b. Visitors are reminded that the importation of alcohol, pork products, personal firearms, and any suggestive/pornographic materials (videotapes, magazines or books) is strictly prohibited by Kuwaiti law. Kuwait is still clearing mines and munitions. Visitors must remain on major paved roads when traveling in Kuwait. Travel north of Jahra toward the Iraqi-Kuwaiti border is not authorized without approval from the embassy and an appropriate escort.

c. Embassy Kuwait's normal workweek is Sunday through Thursday, and office hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The time difference with the East Coast of the United States is EST plus eight hours. The embassy switchboard number is (965) 2259-1001, and the IVG number is 4950000. The after-hours number which rings at Marine Guard Post One is (965) 2538-2098. The mission duty officer can be reached through the embassy switchboard, Post One or by cell phone at (965) 9967-7265. The embassy pouch address is 6200 Kuwait Place, Dulles, VA 20189-6200.

d. Threat Assessment: Kuwait is a high-threat post and the military threatcon is currently Charlie. We have increased security precautions at official U.S. installations in Kuwait and recommend that all Americans in Kuwait remain alert to their surroundings and review their personal security practices.

e. Health Advisory for Kuwait: Visitors from November to March can expect cold winds and, at times, heavy rains. Light winter clothing is suitable for Kuwait during these months. At this time, allergies and colds are more common, and visitors to the area are advised to bring over-the-counter medications, such as Tylenol, Ibuprofen and cough medicine, with them for self-treatment. April through October is the hot season in Kuwait. Temperatures reach 120-140 degrees F in summer. Caution should be taken to prevent dehydration and heat exhaustion by 1) drinking plenty of fluids and 2) staying indoors, especially during peak temperature hours of noon to 3:00 p.m. 1200-1500). Low humidity coupled with high temperatures creates excessive moisture loss from evaporation. It is necessary to drink 2-4 quarts of water daily to prevent dehydration.

f. Money: Credit cards are widely accepted at hotels, restaurants

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and other establishments throughout Kuwait and ATM machines are also readily available. For travelers on official orders, the Commercial Bank of Kuwait can provide accommodation services (cashing a personal check drawn on a U.S. bank into local currency) up to a maximum of USD 300.00 per day from noon to 2:00 p.m., Saturday through Wednesday. At the current rate of exchange, one Kuwaiti Dinar (KD) is equivalent to approximately USD 3.55.

g. CAA Access: Visitors who need unescorted access into secure areas of the mission must slug cables to the attention of the RSO, and include the level of their clearance. The cable should include the visitor's Social Security Number, and the name of the agency granting the clearance. Cables should include the ASEC tag to ensure distribution to the RSO office and the Marine Security guard at Post One.

h. Computer and Electronics Usage: Sensitive military information has been discovered recently on business center computers at local hotels in Kuwait City. All U.S. Government personnel and contractors must remember that it is their responsibility to observe good computer and information security practices. Information processed on computers in hotel business centers, through email correspondence or document creation, is highly exploitable. Public computers located in hotel business centers, internet cafes, airport lounges, etc. should never be used to process, store or disseminate sensitive information. Compromise of sensitive government or military information can result in serious damage to national security. Compromises of sensitive personal data can result in significant personal and financial hardship. Random checks are conducted by Embassy personnel on public PC's. Breaches on COMPUSEC will result in the violator receiving security infractions and/or security violations. Interagency security standards prohibit the introduction or use of non-USG owned computer hardware and software at all USG diplomatic facilities. Cell phones, palm pilots, radios and other convenience electronics are prohibited in all secure areas of the mission.

i. Photography: Tourist photography is encouraged in Kuwait. However, it is strictly forbidden to photograph public buildings, economic infrastructure, or military and other security-related facilities and personnel. Confiscation of film and camera and even arrest may result from doing so. A good rule of thumb: If there is

any doubt as to whether a photograph should be taken, don't take it.

j. Action Request: Each visitor, regardless of length of stay, must bring or forward fiscal data to pay for direct costs of the visit. Each agency, organization or visiting delegation will be charged for the actual costs attributed to their visit. Direct charge costs include, but are not limited to: American and LES staff overtime (e.g., expeditor, accommodation exchange, representational event support), field travel, lodging and meals and incidental expenses (M&IE) by embassy employees, vehicle rentals, long-distance telephone calls, equipment rentals, office supplies and all other costs that are directly attributable to the visit. If fiscal data on a traveler's authorization is to be used for this purpose, this information must be spelled out in the travel orders and sufficient funding provided to meet these expenses. In addition, for TDYers over thirty (30) days, there will be a charge for ICASS support services. If your sponsoring agency is not signed up for ICASS services at post, please be prepared to sign an ICASS Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for ICASS support services upon arrival. The agency should provide post with written communication, generated by the traveler's headquarters, that confirms the agency will pay ICASS charges for the TDYer, provide the agency ICASS billing code for the TDY support to be provided, and authorize the traveler to sign the ICASS invoice generated by the TDY module. When travel is urgent, TDYers should bring this document with them to ensure there are no interruptions in the provision of services. Post will not provide any services to a TDYer staying in excess of 30 days without having received this documentation prior to day 31 of the TDY.

k. Visit Kuwait's Classified Website at
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/kuwait/>

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